

know  
your *Girls*



Black women are about 40%  
more likely to die from breast cancer.

Together, we can change that fact.  
Knowing your breasts can save your life.



Know your breasts like you **Know Your Girls.org**





# Know Your Risk Factors



Everyone is at risk of breast cancer—but some of us are at a higher risk than others. Our risk depends on our unique combination of risk factors. A risk factor is anything that affects risk, for better or worse. Understanding our risk factors means we can get on a screening schedule with our doctors and take other actions to stay on top of our breast health.



## AGE

The older you are, the higher your risk of breast cancer. Age is one big factor in what screening tests you get, and how often. That said, it's never too early to get on top of your breast health and learn about all your risk factors. Even women in their 20s can get breast cancer and Black women are more likely to get it at a younger age.



## GENES

Certain changes in our genes that can pass from parent to child, a.k.a. inherited gene mutations, can increase our cancer risk. The best-known genes linked to breast cancer are BRCA1 and BRCA2. About 1 in 400 people in the U.S. have a mutation in one or both. If you know you have a mutation, you can take action to reduce your risk and take extra care of your breast health.



## EXERCISE

Exercising regularly lowers your risk of breast and other types of cancer. What you do doesn't need to be intense or time-consuming. Even physical activity like taking the stairs instead of the elevator, biking short distances instead of driving or parking farther away when you drive to the store can make a difference.



## ALCOHOL

The more you drink, the higher your risk of breast cancer. Even 2-3 alcoholic drinks per day can increase your risk 20 percent. Drinking in moderation may have health benefits in terms of heart disease and high blood pressure. A good guideline is not to have more than 1 drink per day (or 2 for males) to protect your breast health.



## HEALTH HISTORY

Health issues you or your relatives have had in the past may mean you have a higher risk of breast cancer. If you've ever had cancer, or if you've had breast conditions including hyperplasia and lobular carcinoma in situ (LCIS), your doctor may recommend earlier and more frequent screening. Same if one or more members of your mother's or father's families have had breast, ovarian or prostate cancer.



## BREAST DENSITY

If you're one of the roughly half of women with dense breasts, your risk of breast cancer is 4-5 times higher. This isn't about how dense your breasts feel—it's about how they look on a mammogram. Your doctor can help you figure out your breast density and what screening methods and schedule are best for you.



## FIRST PERIOD

The younger you were when you had your first period, the higher your risk of breast cancer. If you were younger than 12 when your period started, your risk of breast cancer is about 20 percent higher compared to people whose periods started after age 14.



## BREAST CHANGES

Texture. Color. Sudden discharge. Itching or pain. If you or your partner have noticed a change in your breasts, nipples or underarms, get it checked out by a doctor asap. In most cases, changes are harmless, but it's always worth finding out for sure. In cases when a change in your breast is a sign of cancer, the sooner the cancer is diagnosed and treated, the better your chance of survival.

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